

# HUMANITIES

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## NETWORK

### Rethinking Things with Nikki Giovanni

At the 1990 Public Humanities Lecture, writer Nikki Giovanni brought her wide-ranging thoughts on contemporary culture to an enthusiastic Oakland audience of 900. Education, race relations, and the future of the species formed the central topics of her lecture, but she also found time to throw some jabs at conventional notions about youth, marriage, and motherhood. Repeatedly throughout her hour-and-a-half talk, Giovanni prodded listeners to bring their best, freshest thoughts to the social and personal problems they face. "Rethink everything," she said. "Nothing is sacred, there is nothing that cannot be discussed."

Giovanni said that too many mediocre people had come to positions of influence in American life, in politics, the board room and the classroom. As a Black professor of creative writing at Virginia Polytechnic and State University accustomed to teaching students who are white, she criticized white educators who say they don't know how to teach Black students.

"I don't understand that," she said. "Why do I teach white students all day long and you can't teach Black students? Some of them you learn their names, some of them you don't. You grade their papers, you turn them back, you correct them. What the hell is this? What is the big deal that you can't teach Black students? I don't understand things like that."

"And I don't know why it is that we're expected to learn Shakespeare and Milton, I don't understand things like that, and they can't teach Langston Hughes and Gwen Brooks — no, no. I don't understand this. Of course you can. You read it, you say this is what the poet said. Bingo! This is not hard and we've got to stop pretending that it is. We've got to stop making a problem for ourselves, which is what we're doing. We've got to face the fact that our children need to be taught."



Acknowledging that her remarks might contain something to offend everyone, Giovanni railed against men who do not support their children, politicians who fail to address the problems of the poor, and college administrators who exploit young athletes.

"In the last twenty years, America has absolutely come to the bottom of the heap," she said. "Our people cannot read and write. We're supposed to be a democracy. This is a joke. How can you have a democratic form of government if people don't even know what that is and can't read the information about it? How can you do that? Somebody said, well, reading isn't important, we can put it on video. No, damn it! Information is passed through books! You have to read, you have to read. It's so basic."

"A mere hundred and twenty years ago," Giovanni continued, "it was against the law to teach somebody who looked like me to read, right? I have to have a lot of respect for reading. It wasn't against the law a couple of hundred years ago, or a hundred and twenty-five years ago, to teach, or forbid me to look at videos or listen to music. Somebody will say, that's because they didn't have it; I don't know why, but I know it was against the law, I do know that, to teach people like me to read. You and I, who look like me, especially, have got to cherish the written word. It obviously means something. You've got to add to the written word."

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*"It dawned on me, of course, you're going to say the same thing to the homeless that you say to the 'homed': This is your story. Don't let somebody take your story away from you."*

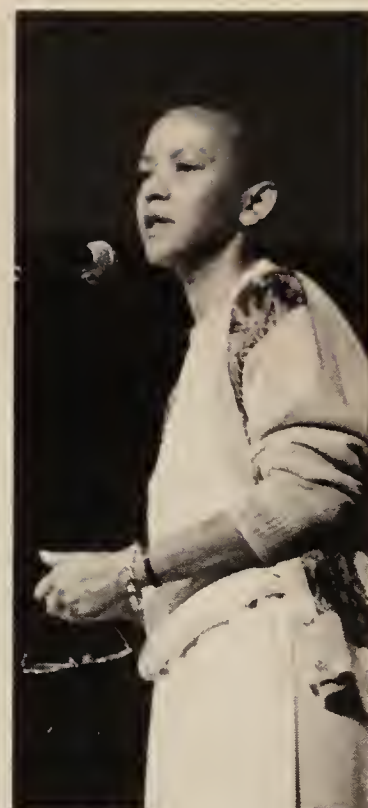
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Giovanni said that as an American, she felt embarrassed that fellow citizens were living in the streets. She recounted a recent trip to Washington, D.C., where she met with the late homeless advocate, Mitch Snyder, and spoke to a group of homeless people.

"I'm standing there and I'm thinking what am I going to say to the homeless," she said. "And it dawned on me, of course, you're going to say the same thing to the homeless that you say to the 'homed': This is your story. Don't let somebody take your story away from you. I don't care what condition you're in, it's your story, you've gotta write it... I know one thing, whether they're living on the street or not, Anne Frank taught us, no matter what you're going through, write your story."

Giovanni said that our country seems to have decided that some people are expendable, a mistaken idea that in the past has led to killing. She said if the public were literate and informed, they would reject the notion. She also looked to history for perspective on racial tensions today.

As audience members called out requests, Giovanni read two of her poems, "I Am She" and "Egotripping."



"In 1619, we brought the first Black slaves to America," Giovanni said. "In about 1621, and someone can correct me if I'm wrong, the first Black child was born in America, it was a couple years, was it not? We have had over 200 years of teaching each other to hate and distrust each other; can we then be surprised that we no longer get along?... I'm simply submitting that we have learned to disassociate over the last couple of hundred years, and it's going to take us a couple of hundred to learn to associate. We can do it. Human beings have the potential to be wonderful. I know of no better way to say that."

"You here in this area, right here in the Oakland area, you had an earthquake last year," she said. "People who didn't know each other risked their lives to climb up on bridges to bring people down. It was a wonderful thing. I watched a Black man climb up, it was on my CNN, climbed up on the bridge to get a white woman out of a car, which he did. Never thought about it one way or the other. She was in trouble, she said help, he went and did it, brought her down. These people wouldn't even have spoken without a tragedy. It's a fact, that's a fact."

"So, what is that telling us?" she asked. "That's telling us something is wrong. If we will come together in tragedy, what are we saying to the gods that be — bring us constant tragedy so that we can learn to talk? There's flooding going on all over Texas and in the Midwest as you are well aware. Towns are being wiped out. All of a sudden, we are not having gender. We're not having religion. We're not having race. We're having floods. So people that don't talk are all of a sudden going out to help each other. What message are we sending to the gods of earth — send us fire, send us flood, send us pestilence? What are we asking — that we have tragedy after tragedy after tragedy so that we can find out that we're beautiful? You know we can do better."

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*"If we will come together in tragedy, what are we saying to the gods that be — bring us constant tragedy so that we can learn to talk to each other?"*

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# Oakland's Tribal Diversity Revisited

by Malcolm Margolin, Publisher, Heyday Press

*Editor's Note: At the Public Humanities Conference, Malcolm Margolin spoke about Oakland's early residents, the Ohlone Indians. This article is adapted from that talk. Margolin has studied and written about local Indian culture for the last 17 years and edits the quarterly magazine News from Native California. He said that all morning he had been bothered by a new, complex, inconvenient idea, which made him reconsider the tremendous diversity that flourished among pre-European California cultures.*

In the Oakland area a couple of hundred years ago, a group of people called the Huchiun, one of the Ohlone tribes, had several villages. One of them was where the Sherman Williams paint factory is now, downstream from the Temescal section. Another one was on Spenger's [Restaurant] parking lot in Berkeley, and there were several other villages. You can still go up into the hills and find signs of the Huchiun having lived. There's a wonderful old quarry site, up in the Montclair district. There are mortar holes.

If you went a few miles east of Oakland, you came onto a whole new people speaking a whole different language, the Saklan. They were speaking a Bay Miwok language. If you went to the north around San Pablo you would get to the Karkins, who were speaking a whole different language, the Karkin language. If you went down south past Fremont, you'd hit another couple of tribes that spoke the same language, but then as you get down toward San Jose, you'd hear the Tamyen language. If you went across the bay to San Francisco, people spoke a language called Ramaytush. If you went over toward Marin County, there were people speaking a Coast Miwok language. If you went up past Benecia and over to Solano County, there were Patwin-speaking people. If you went over toward Mount Diablo past the Saklans, there were people speaking a Yokuts language. Everywhere you went you had these small groups living in small towns — 50, 100, maybe. One hundred fifty was a big city. And they each had their own way of living, their own culture, their own language.

And it's always mystified people how this could be. For years, people have written books about the phenomenal diversity of this area. It's not as if there were high mountain ranges and big valleys that were isolating people for long periods of time. There was easy communication. What in the world was keeping people apart? Why was there such a tremendous diversity?

*"I began to wonder whether or not the things that defined that older world weren't very similar to the things that define the world today."*

Well, I was thinking about it in terms of Oakland and this conference. And it suddenly occurred to me that in Oakland we have that same kind of tremendous diversity locked into neighborhoods. We have Black neighborhoods, Chinese neighborhoods, white neighborhoods, Hispanic neighborhoods. They're not clean tribal divisions by any means, but they're that same sort of thing that used to be spread out over the Bay Area. Here in today's Oakland, it's more compact.

I began to wonder whether or not the things that defined that older world weren't very similar to the things that define the world today: on one hand, the desire of people to be close to those that speak their language, that share their values, that share their art forms, with whom they're comfortable. And at the same time there's that negative aspect, that sense of exclusion, that people are very often pushed into these places, that they can't get out.

And I began to think about that old world of the California Indians and the trading relationships these different people had. For example, the people living here in Oakland were rich in shellfish. You had these marvelous marshes that went out into the bay. And they would trade the shellfish to the Saklan over in Lafayette, because they were rich in things like pine nuts. And coming over from San Francisco, you had abalone. The Carquinez Straits were where the salmon ran, these tremendous schools of salmon that were running in through the straits. It was said that they were running so thick you could almost walk across the straits on the backs of the salmon.

When you first look into another culture, like the culture of the California Indians, you're struck by how different it is from your own. There are certainly profound differences, but the more you get into it the more you also begin to recognize variations on a human theme: that theme of people both staying together and being excluded from each other. That tribalism is there. In those days they needed each other, and yet if they ever got too close, there would be a kind of standoffish warfare in which they kept each other back, in which the boundaries were continually being defined. These are many of the same themes that I think we see today in an urban area...

The people here lived close to their land. Today, when we come to a place like Oakland, we're struck by the magnitude of the human enterprise — the freeways, the power of the traffic, the tremendous might of airplanes coming in and out, the bridges, those big derricks along the port. Everywhere we look we see signs of human beings and the real greatness, just in terms of scale, of what people have done. Back then people were living in little villages of 100, 150. They lived widely separated from one another and roamed over a vast area. This area was one of marshes, it was one of swamps, it was one of plains and of forests. There were pronghorn antelope and elk and salmon and eagles and grizzly bears and a magnificently abundant kind of wildlife.

Back then, I think that being a human being was not such a big deal. What was a big deal, where the real beauty and power lay in the world, was in maybe a grizzly bear or in the flight of an eagle or something like that. And it led people into a kind of attitude, or it made possible a kind of attitude, of a sort of brotherhood with the animal world, where one really felt a legitimate sense of worship, where the strongest thing around might be a grizzly bear, and the swiftest thing around was perhaps an antelope. And there was a sense of the ways in which all of the animals and all of the people were locked into relationship, were locked into a common mythology, were locked into a common past, and were locked into strands of reciprocity, where they all helped each other out and worked in the same system...

The people were very much tied to the seasons. Today people often talk about how Indians hunted, or how Indians fished, or how Indians gathered stuff. These



Map shows many of the languages Indian people spoke in the Bay Area before Europeans arrived, courtesy of *News from Native California* magazine. Margolin said some later scholars found this abundance of diversity puzzling.

*"In those days, they needed each other, and yet if they ever got too close, there would be a kind of standoffish warfare in which they kept each other back, in which the boundaries were continually being defined."*

are the kinds of questions that Anglos very often ask because we're a technologically oriented group of people. We want to know *how* people built traps and *what* their bows and arrows were like. I think a major part of the technology had to do with the knowledge of these things, but it also had to do with the timing of *when* one did something. When the missionaries came here and set up their missions, they virtually starved to death for years and years. They had superior guns, they knew how to go out and shoot things, they just didn't know when to go, where to go, how to take this kind of rhythm. This whole area had a kind of pulsation, of schools of fish, of crops ripening, of salmon, of migrating waterfowl. The Indians understood how you prepare things and how to be at the right place when certain things came through. This was a knowledge gained over thousands and thousands and thousands of years. In terms of natural history knowledge, I have no question whatsoever that in the last 200 years we've lost much more knowledge than we've gained...

In these small places, everybody knew each other. You lived in a world totally without strangers. Everybody you ever saw was somebody you knew. You knew their parents, you knew them intimately, and you were locked into living with this small group of people, with a kind of absolute inevitability. You would never really get out of it, you would never in your entire life travel more than maybe seven or ten miles from the place where you were born.



# Intertribal Friendship House Looks at Building Community

In the 1950s, Indians from many other regions and states began pouring into Oakland, one of the federal government's Relocation Program sites. Since then the Friendship House has provided a variety of services, as well as a place to socialize. In connection with CCH's conference on "A Sense of Belonging, A Sense of Place," the organization mounted an exhibit of historical photos with comments by community members. Here is a sampling:

**Byron Sanderson:** "When we came over here to the Bay Area, I had never been up this far north. So it was all new. And they were going to put us in the training program for a trade. What I did was sign a paper, and I'm still curious about what I signed away. We went through a lot of adjustments here. It didn't take very long for some people to more or less give up hope, I guess. And they would leave. In three months time, only half of us were here. It depended on what trade you went into. I went into drafting."

**Joan Adams:** "The Singles' Supper Club met on Wednesday evenings. They paid 50 cents for supper. There were usually forty or forty-five young people. I don't know how we ever squashed them around the tables. I remember card tables stretched from one end of the House to the other, with chairs just jammed along the sides. But really, I think it was a dating bureau."

**Lois Taylor:** "There are people who are important to me. They are the ones who I've gotten a lot of my guidance and knowledge from that I have now, and that I can pass on to my own children. And just by knowing them, I can say they are a part of my family. That's where the friendship goes into family."



Top: Lucy Hale, Ruth Pachert, and Mary Watson: three sisters in the city. Above: Irmlee Yellow Eagle, with her baby in 1958, who said, "If there was no Friendship House, I would have gone home ten times over I was so lonely." At right: Singles' Supper Club at the Friendship House, 1956. Photos courtesy of Intertribal Friendship House.

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And I'll just say very briefly, that that for me is really a lost world. We're so used, in our world, to approaching each other as bunches of strangers — continually. I was listening to everybody introduce each other earlier today, and this in the Indian world was a truly unknown circumstance. You never had to introduce somebody, you never met anybody new. Everybody you met you knew intimately, and they knew you intimately. Consequently I think that in our bearing toward one another and our ways of approaching each other, we have a kind of stranger quality. Even if we know people, we can escape from them. We're continually having to prove something to people, and we have this cult of privacy in our lives. Even our best friends we see very seldom. In old world society you saw people every day and they were the same people that you saw. There was no privacy, and there was no escape. And the quality of the way people talked to each other was different. Back then, if you listen to recordings of those older people talking, what you hear were circular conversations, very slow conversations. They repeated what each other said, and the conversation went on and on. It was for the love of hearing the other person's voice. And that was because there was no real news to tell, everybody knew what was going on, there was no news. Things just kind of went around, and it's almost like you hear the people sing to one another. They would make stories up, and they would tell stories, and they would repeat the stories. And it would go on and on, and on and on. And the tone was very, very lovely. You know, we think we have many luxuries in this culture. But that luxury of being able to sit with people and talk

in a sort of sensual, leisurely way without really accomplishing anything — not just for hours or days, but for an entire lifetime — is really a luxury we have lost. And I think the loss is severe...

I'll end by saying that it's convenient to think that Indians' culture ended with the coming of the Spanish, with the setting up of the missions, and with this new era. It didn't end at all. It certainly changed, but it didn't end. And what happened to the people that lived in Oakland, the Huchiun, was that they were drawn into Mission Dolores, for the most part. And then many of them merged with the Spanish population and the Anglo population. But after the missions ended, in the East Bay there was a village that grew up again, near Pleasanton and Sunol. Many of the old East Bay Indians went back to that village, and it survived until 1906. In 1906, they still had a sweat-house, they still had chiefs, they still had traditional shamans, they still had people speaking the old Ohlone languages. When Harrington, an anthropologist, was here in the 1920s, there were still a couple of people from whom he could learn about these languages that were originally spoken here in Oakland.

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And their descendants are still around. There's a group of people in San Jose right now that are actually petitioning the government for tribal recognition. And there are several other groups that are either on the verge of petitioning the government for federal recognition or are just not bothering to do so, although they certainly know who they are and they certainly know their past. And these groups have been added to by the wave of people that came here during the relocation from other areas, when the government sent Indians from Oklahoma, from South Dakota, to Oakland. Today, these later arrivals center around the Intertribal Friendship House, and they have carried on their own traditions from another place.

The dominant culture has tended to slight, to ignore all these Indian cultures. We tend to really ignore what they have to teach us. But many of these people are very much here today, very much alive, and I think the dominant culture has a lot to gain by listening closely to what the older residents of this area have to say.



# The Ongoing Pain of Pressing for Change

by Renato Rosaldo,  
Professor of Anthropology,  
Stanford University

*Editor's Note: Dr. Rosaldo spoke as part of a panel exploring how we can live together in a multicultural community. This article is adapted from his talk.*

Renato Rosaldo



*“Belonging for me, in the ‘sense of place, sense of belonging,’ has to do with shaping our own destinies and participating in society in a democratic way.”*

As I think of these issues of belonging, I think of a capsule phrase, maybe something like this: How can we work out a way for people to have a right to be different and to belong at the same time? By “belong,” I don’t think of just feeling good, although it probably does have some of the kind of entitlement that you get from club membership, but it’s also an ability to influence the dominant institutions of our society. Belonging for me, in the ‘sense of place, sense of belonging,’ has to do with shaping our own destinies and participating in society in a democratic way.

About 20 years ago in the university, we were in what I call “the Green Card phase,” and that’s about when I came into the university. When I looked around and spoke to people, it was a little bit like jogging in suburban areas, where somebody makes an individual decision and says, “I’m going to start jogging.” It’s a deeply personal decision, and that person gets out in the street and says, “Everybody’s doing it, look at all these people, how long have they been doing it? Oh, they started today.” That’s the way I felt in 1970, when I got there and I looked around. There was a little trickle of people of color in the university, and when I went around and asked, “How long have you been here?” they all said, “We all got here yesterday.” So I was part of that trickle then; that was the “Green Card Phase.” Then there was a kind of phase I’ve named from the institution’s point of view: the Retention Phase — that was, could any of us last? We did, with a lot of teeth-gritting and turning purple and having patience (turning purple is part of having patience).

I think we’re in another phase now. I’m not sure exactly what to call it, but I think it’s a phase in which the people who got their Green Cards — who’ve come into these institutions — are now pressing the institutions to change. The pressure is coming from us and from our communities. And the question is, can the institutions be responsive?

One day, I was supposed to talk to a very august body, the Faculty Senate. I was getting ready to talk and thinking about what I would say, and I started noticing that I was trembling and shaking from my toes all the way up to my head, my ears, or wherever shaking stops. I was trembling and then the next thing I knew, I was crying. I was crying and crying and I couldn’t stop. I said, what is this about? It had something to do with my past, something to do with what was at stake in the talk, and it also had to do with the way that I was having to change who I was in that institution. I think that it had to do with both pride and oppression at once.

What it brought back to me was a sense, a remembering of the days at Mansfeld Junior High School in Tucson. If I went out on the playground and happened to speak my language, Spanish, with somebody, and a teacher overheard me, I would get swats. Swats are a custom in which you bend down and hold your ankles (and guess what’s up in the air when you do that — if you can’t guess, try it and you’ll see). And somebody takes a board and hits that part of you that’s up in the air. The crime this punishment fit was speaking Spanish on the playground. This was so I would gain fluency in English, I suppose, and get a good job and fit in and be a competent member of society. I think I was fairly good at English at that point.

There are a wealth of experiences of that kind that I think any person of color in this society, who has a kind of double consciousness or biculturalism, would’ve gone through. But there are moments when you remember them more vividly than others. I think of the ‘English only’ initiative that passed, predictably. Not so predictable was the kind of annihilation that I felt when it passed, the kind of annihilation where you lie on your bed, and you look at the ceiling, and just keep looking at it for days.

I think that the other thing that day as I prepared to speak was the particular issue that I had to address, and what it was going to do to me in the institution. I was going to speak against a requirement, or for a modification of a requirement, that said all first-year undergraduate students need to know the Great Books — Aristotle, Plato, Shakespeare, Milton, all the rest, we all know what the list sounds like, roughly. And these were supposed to be the most important things for the first-year students to learn. I thought about that, and I said, well, we don’t really want to throw out the Great Books, even though William Bennett seems to think that we do; but that’s not the point. We want to have something a little more diverse than that. It’s not that we want to throw them out; we want to kind of change the mixture. And there was intense pressure on us, and we were getting a lot of hostility at that moment. We were also hearing a lot of pieties, that went something like this: “Well, it’s really for your own good. After all, what we have to do is learn *our* heritage first, before we learn about other cultures.” And some of us listening to the words, “our heritage first,” versus other cultures, said, “Who’s the ‘we’?” “Who’s the ‘we’?” They were saying this about a group of writers, not a single one of which was an American. Not only that, there was not a single woman on the list, and fifty percent of the students in that course were women. Not only that, there wasn’t a single person of non-European origin on the list. At that time, a third of the student body was of non-European origin. A third was Asian American, Chicano or Puerto Rican, African American or Native American. It’s now about forty-three percent for next year’s entering class.

The question, then, was, “Who’s the ‘we’?”

In thinking about that question, let me read something to you and give a very brief kind of parable somebody told me. Let me read from Adrienne Rich, the poet. She has written a brief essay called “Invisibility in Academe,” where she talks about what was at stake in this debate and still is at stake in it. There are still people that say, “We’ve got to learn our heritage before we study other cultures.” Adrienne Rich says:

*Invisibility is a dangerous and painful condition, and lesbians are not the only people to know it. When those who have power to name and to socially construct reality choose not to see or hear you, whether you are dark-skinned, old, disabled, female or speak with a different accent or dialect than theirs; when someone with the authority of a teacher, say, describes the world and you are not in it, there’s a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked into a mirror and saw nothing. Yet you know you exist, and others like you, but this is a game with mirrors. It takes some strength of soul — and not just individual strength, but collective understanding — to resist this void, this nonbeing, into which you are thrust, and to stand up, demanding to be seen and heard.*

I think that’s what I was trying to do the day that I was shaking and trembling from my toes to my ears and crying. I spoke to a disabled person, and the disabled person said to me — a very violent kind of parable — he said, “It used to be that people in our main institutions, especially our universities, decided that all the students were nails. They were all alike, they were nails, and so the university became a hammer. But you know, now a number of us who’ve come into the university are porcelain. When is the university going to change?”



# Making Space on the Block:

## What Grandmother Knew

by Beverly Robinson, Associate Professor of Theater and Folklore Studies, UCLA

*This article has been adapted and condensed from Dr. Robinson's speech at the Public Humanities Conference. The editor has attempted to retain as much as possible of the presentation's rich oral quality in this written translation.*

When I was about six years old, I lived on Parker Street in Berkeley, near Sacramento Street. I'll never forget the time there was a "big conversation" going on in our front yard. From what I could hear, it went like this: "Well somebody's got to do something." "They just can't leave it out there." "Well they should've talked to us about it." I remember that it was a major issue — something was wrong in the neighborhood.

My grandmother stood in the doorway and said, "Let's go talk to them about it." And Mrs. Alameda, across the street, who was Italian, was in our yard talking about it; the people next door — African Americans — were there. A woman about six doors up, Mrs. Sommers, was also there. (I'll never forget Mrs. Sommers; now, I always thought Mrs. Sommers was of Anglo heritage. Much later, I learned she was African American. This was not until about six years ago — she's been dead for at least 20 years!) Well, Mrs. Sommers was in the yard. Bobbie's grandmother was also there — his grandparents were Japanese. Everybody was in our yard talking about something that was happening. My grandmother said again, "Let's go talk to them about it." Somebody said, "Well how are you going to go talk to them? You don't even know how they feel about it." Somebody else said they didn't even think they spoke English. And my grandmother confidently said, "Oh, I'll get them to understand."

Now, we children knew that if my grandmother — we called her Mommie — went somewhere and was going to speak on something, it was serious business, so we were all ready to march behind her to see what was going on. We got to a few doors up the street, and there was a Latino and Black family living there, both families in the same house. And the "big conversation" on our block was about all the cars. This was a major issue on the 1500 block of Parker Street in Berkeley. My grandmother walked up to the people, I guess it was the woman that was there, a Latina, and she said, "Hello!" And the woman spoke, and my grandmother talked to her in a very quiet voice for a long time, but none of us could hear her. We weren't even sure if the woman could understand my grandmother.

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*"This is a neighborhood here, let's make some room."*

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The next thing I knew, my grandmother turned around, came over to all the men and said, "OK. Start clearing the spaces. What it is, is they don't have but a driveway for one car. Let's make room for them. This is a neighborhood here, let's make some room. They could put a car in our driveway." My grandfather looked dismayed, smiled, and said, "Yeah, I guess you're right." And then people began making spaces. It used to be that you put your trash cans in your

Beverly Robinson described life on Parker Street in Berkeley, where her grandmother had created a variety of ways to bring people together. Shown with Robinson are panelists Renato Rosaldo, William Wong, and moderator Lawrence P. Crouchett.



driveway or out in front of your homes — forget that: They moved everything to make room for the neighbors, because the neighbors didn't have enough space.

I've never forgotten about that happening, because it was an early experience with the concept of making room for other folks — not ignoring them, not considering things to be a problem, and not even thinking that perhaps there's no communication, but instead *making room for others*.

The second vivid thing that I recall as a child growing up on Parker Street was what was called "the welcoming committee." Now, by the time that I was about twelve years old, we had a lot of students and a lot of families moving into Berkeley who were from Japan, and it had a lot to do with movement after World War II. In our block, we had what was called a welcoming committee. Adults and children worked on the welcoming committee. All the kids had to get together and select something special to give to another kid. There was a huge basket that was prepared at someone's house, and the basket was presented to this new family.

Now, I remember one time I had to give a stuffed doll that really meant a lot to me. As far as I was concerned, I didn't have anything else. I kept telling my grandmother, "You know, I really don't want to give this. This is my favorite." And she said, "Well, don't give it. Find something else." I said, "But I don't have anything else to give *but* this," and she said, "Maybe if you give that, you'll find out that it will bring you back something that you never expected in return." So I gave my stuffed doll. The friend that I met who had moved in — his name was Kenneth Matsumura — he was a genius on the piano and spoke very little English. Kenneth taught me how to say "what" in Japanese — "nunnie"\* — and I thought that was so fantastic because I had a godmother named Aunt Nunnie. I said, "So you're name is Aunt What!" For me, as a child, what this meant was that I was learning another language. It was very important for me at that time.

This was all part of a little community movement. The next thing that happened in the 1500 block of Parker Street was that the adults put together what was called "the exchange program." Once a month, we stayed at somebody else's house that had nothing to do with our immediate culture. So, at one time I learned how to say "Kak porsche vai-e-chey,"\* because there was a Russian family there, and I went and stayed with them and learned about Sergei Rachmaninoff; and what started out to be one day turned into a weekend. The kids on the block looked forward to it, because (a) it was a chance to get away from home, and (b) you could get into somebody else's space. And everybody baked — I don't care what it was they baked,

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*"When you talk about how we live in a multicultural community, you first have to acknowledge that there are other people, other than ourselves."*

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everybody baked, so there was always some kind of a sweet goodie. But what it did for me is that I learned what other people were about, simply because the neighborhood got itself together.

When you talk about how we live in a multicultural community, you first have to acknowledge that there *are* other people, other than ourselves. You begin to participate in other people's lives and you let them know — you don't always wait for other people to speak, as my grandmother would say. She was really good about getting out and learning who is on the block, who are the new folks, how do you get to communicate with them. She was very, very good at that, and she *loved* children. So it was never a problem about kids coming to our house. (Now, when you became a teenager, that was a different story: you're no longer a kid, she didn't want you over.)

But, her whole concept was getting to know other people and making them feel wanted and making them feel welcomed. I learned that people basically are shy, and I didn't know really what that meant, except that, if you don't reach out, then it's very hard, because sometimes people are not going to say, "I need you to reach out." New people are basically shy. I questioned my grandmother about the various things she did over the years, and I said, "Why did you even try to go talk to the lady? Did she speak English?" Mommie said, "No." Confused, I asked what had she said to her? "I didn't," she said. "I merely rubbed her back and looked her in the face and smiled and said a couple of words, which I don't remember, but she understood my hand on her back. She understood my smile and she nodded. So I made everybody else move on it." And that was what it was all about. Mommie said that it's always best to be a member of the construction gang, rather than the wrecking crew.

Something else which I learned from my grandmother — on good old Parker Street — was from quizzes or things people in the neighborhood would put together for us to do. We called it "busy work." One time, we were going over to other people's houses and asking them about the role of hair in different cultures. I did not know that the original bullet-proof vests were made of human hair, and particularly the hair of Asian women. When the earlier bullet-proof

\*These are merely approximate, phonetic spellings.

Continued on next page



# Space on the Block

Continued from previous page



Beverly Robinson

vests were made, Asian women who went to the movies would hold their hair, their braids wrapped around their hands and wrists real tight, hoping that no one would come and cut off their hair, because it could be sold for a lot of money. I did not know, except from Mrs. Alameda, about how much hair was worth if you were Italian; it could be sold for wigs. From the Latino family that lived up the street (the Latino and the Black families that were living together in this household because of economics), from the woman's daughter, I learned that in some of the early embroidery work that was done by many of the Mexican-American women, that if they ran out of black thread, they would simply pull a strand of their hair and thread the needle to finish the work. You can tell, as a folklorist, some of the older work from the newer work. After ironing it, the hair burns, and you can tell it was some of the older embroidery work, versus newer work done when black thread was a lot more affordable.

*"Mommie said that it's always better to be a member of the construction gang, rather than the wrecking crew."*

I then learned later, of course, in doing these exercises, which became much more important to me during a very revolutionary era of the sixties, the role of hair as it related to African Americans. I'll never forget the first time the police stopped me in Los Angeles, and a white policeman ran his hand through my hair, which was the *worst* thing he could have ever done. You *just* do not put your hand through my hair! That's just a no-no, culturally and intellectually. And I couldn't believe it. And what was he doing it for? He was looking for weapons, because of the Afro hair style. The style was not only popular, but this method of police search was common — not only in Los Angeles but here as well in the Bay Area. The role of hair is an interesting research exercise. I have my own university students, and I guide children through the same kind of exercise, because it has a way of giving you and them an opportunity to learn and understand something about neighbors and their history on a very common topic, a common item that we all take for granted — hair. But more than anything, whether one does a research exercise or finds something for the welcome basket, these are ways you get into another world, a much larger world, a global world that really says, you cannot just zap people out or turn off the television. The reality is that we have a multi-ethnic enclave, and a "community" only exists when we "come into unity." That is what it means, and I guess it helps us to be members of the construction gang rather than the wrecking crew.



Above: Poet Lee Mun Wah read and discussed his work as part of a community event that PEN Oakland presented in connection with CCH's conference: "Oakland Out Loud: How the Different Cultures of Oakland Have Produced a Multi-Ethnic Literature." An Oaklander since birth, Mun Wah also produces a local radio program on Asian-American issues called "Empty Bamboo," heard on Berkeley's KPFA. Six other authors with ethnically diverse backgrounds were on hand to read short pieces and talk about their connections to Oakland, as well as to discuss the contributions of Oakland writers Jack London, Joaquin Miller, and Ina Coolbrith.

Left: Jason and Justin Reed, twin brothers from Oakland, capped the June 9 conference off with traditional African-American storytelling, including one based on a Langston Hughes story.

## Giovanni

Continued from page 1



Nikki Giovanni suggested that we may need new rituals, like throwing parties for people who are divorcing. "They need skilletts, they need toasters at this point," she said. "And you also need your friends."

*"Why don't we quit making decisions for people and decide to do something that's even more difficult: ask how we can be of service. Ask how."*

Giovanni said American Blacks must continue to fight to be seen as individuals.

"I don't want to be a number," she said. "I've been a number all my life. I've fought too long. My grandmother was a number, my great grandmother was a number. I want to be Nikki, I want people to know. Those who hate me, I want them to know who they hate. Those who love me, I would like for them to know

a little bit about who they love. I think it's kind of important, because we have this sort of amorphous thing going, where we dislike each other for no particular reason, because we see each other coming — "I don't like white people," "I don't like Black people" — as if we'd done something. That's not an accomplishment. It's sort of like those old ladies running around saying, "I don't believe in abortion." "Well, you're not pregnant." No. Am I making sense here? Why don't we quit making decisions for people and decide to do something that's even more difficult: ask how we can be of service? Ask how.

"I'm going to submit simply that we have got to start listening to the unlistenable," Giovanni said. "We have got to start thinking what has been considered the unthinkable. We are supposed to be the humanities. I think it should have the 'e' in it: h-u-e-m-a-n-i-t-i-e-s. It would help a lot, wouldn't it? I learned that from Sesame Street: silent 'e' means a lot. All of us are of some color, the world is made up of all of us. I'm simply saying I am in fact hopeful. I'm simply suggesting that you be, also. We've got to stretch just a little bit. We can do better... I'm simply trying to say that actually, self-preservation is not the first law of nature, and it is not. Species preservation is. And we see that anytime we see a tragedy. We see that anytime we have a fire, we see that in an earthquake. Species is. We will run to help each other. I'm simply urging us today, at this 1990 Humanities Lecture, to begin to rethink what it means to be a human being. It is the giving that is important."

Giovanni said that her bent was toward optimism. "You've got to think about the future" she said. "It disturbs me when I'm here in Oakland, a lot. Because I think so many of our youngsters all over the country, but this is a big city, become hopeless. They begin to say, there is no future, it doesn't matter. If human beings don't live for the future, then what are we living for? The present will never work. It doesn't work,



# Remembering Fred Estrada and His Vision

by Susan Gordon, Associate Director  
California Council for the Humanities

When I first met Fred Estrada, he was on a panel at the Orange County Historical Society Fair in October, 1988. He spoke gently yet with great conviction about the place now called Orange County, the place where the hills, the coastline, and the wildlife in some areas not yet rearranged by developers' bulldozers, are those experienced by his ancestors, the Juaneño people and the native peoples who preceded them. The Juaneños, whose original tribal name was Acacgmemem, trace their current name and family histories to the Mission of San Juan Capistrano, established in the eighteenth century. The Acacgmemems, who spoke the Takic dialect of the Shoshonian language, are believed to have migrated to this area more than three thousand years ago.\*

Listening to Fred speak, I wondered what it must feel like to look up at the sky on a moonless night and see the Pleides and Orion from the same angle as one's grandmothers from a thousand years before, to look in any direction and see the same canyons and rises, and to tread on un-bulldozed rocks and dirt that their feet may have touched. Those possibilities seem so unrelated to non-native people's experiences that many wouldn't even contemplate them. It occurred to me that everyone but Fred's people are relative newcomers to Southern California, even those who trace family histories to settlements in the nineteenth century or to the Californio days of the eighteenth century.

As the granddaughter of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe and someone who has lived in many places in North and Central America, I have always been a stranger in someone else's land, trying to adapt to life wherever I have gone. I was intrigued by the prospect of meeting someone who is so rooted to a region that he easily recognizes his own place in the continuity of human history. Feeling somewhat nervous, I approached Fred after the panel presentation at the history conference to ask him what it feels like to have that sort of connection with a thousand years of one's past in the same geographic area. He seemed mildly surprised by the question but looked out the window and considered it for a moment. That was the beginning of our friendship.

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*\*My thanks to Paul Apodaca for his helpful comments on the Shoshonian- and Hokan- speaking peoples of Southern California.*

I mean be fair. The present is usually very boring. I mean Annie was right: "The sun will come out tomorrow..." It just gives you something to shoot for. The present will never be important. Those who live in the past are clearly crazy; anybody you know always muttering about the good old days, you know to stay away from these people. That's true. It is only the future that we shoot for. I recommend the future. You're not busy. No. I recommend that you live for it."

"When we consider, for example, what the Greeks did," Giovanni said, "not even knowing that there was another world out there. When we consider what the Romans did with law, what the British did, and then you realize they didn't have, they didn't even know that the New World existed. We now know the planetary system. What could we do, what could we do if we let the little problems go, if we solved the basics, which we're capable of doing? What would hap-

pen if a generation decides to use the cumulative knowledge of over a million years of human beings being upright? What would happen? I tend to think that something good would happen. I don't worry that nobody would want to collect the garbage if they're smart. I don't worry about things like that. I don't worry that human beings would not do what we have to do. I think we'd find it easier to do the little menial things. I'm simply saying I have faith."

*This is my native land. And to all those of you who live here now, I say, let it be yours too. And to all of you who have come from other places and live here now, I say, please walk softly on this land. Give it some dignity and respect, for it is now yours to share with me.*

Fred went on to talk about his experiences in Orange County. He ended his remarks focusing on community in Orange County, the theme of the conference:

*I believe that in order for Orange County to become a more defined community, its people need to communicate, to have a better understanding of each other, and to interact by gathering together. I believe that this humanities conference is a beginning and must be perpetuated if Orange County is to become a family of families or a community of communities.*

At the close of that very filled and fulfilling day, Fred was energized by what had taken place. "We've got to find a way to keep this going," he said, "to bring these people together again, soon. I'm going to see if we can rent this room for another meeting in a couple of weeks."

That was the beginning of the idea for an ongoing, regional humanities coalition of interested individuals and humanities organizations — libraries, museums, historical societies, academic institutions — to identify or formulate some humanities programming priorities and coordinate efforts to continue bringing the humanities to Orange County residents. Fred took it upon himself to send out mailings and convened several meetings. He also talked individually with others whom he had met through the CCH activity to try to form such a group.

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*"If human beings don't live for the future, then what are we living for? The present will never work... Those who live in the past are clearly crazy."*

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## FRED ESTRADA 1937 - 1990



Fred Estrada was born in San Diego in 1937 and lived most of his life in Southern California. For more than 10 years, he was on the Tribal Council of the Juaneño Band of Native Americans, who trace their ancestry and heritage to the Mission at San Juan Capistrano. He eventually became secretary for the band. He also worked closely with Orange County's planning commission to study local archeological sites and to ensure proper treatment of the sacred objects, paintings, and carvings that had been unearthed at the sites. After helping to plan and participating in the 1989 Public Humanities Conference at Fullerton, he worked with others to try to create an Orange County humanities coalition.

In February of this year, Fred was on hand at a meeting CCH held in Riverside, where he described the work he'd been doing along with Dixie Shaw to get an Orange County coalition off the ground. The next month, the Council members endorsed the idea of supporting community coalitions such as the one Fred had proposed. When I called to tell him of the Council's interest in awarding a grant for the coalition work, Fred had already gathered some ideas about possible projects. He was particularly interested in developing a series of talks that would help people learn about each others' religions.

"I'd like to promote understanding of other religions," he said. "We understand our own traditions from youth, but don't understand much about other people's. That could help us accept the other person's point of view."



Late in the afternoon of May 25 I received a call from Fred's sister, Sally. She told me that he had been killed by a hit and run driver only a mile from his home. Fred Estrada not only touched my life personally, he also left an important mark on the California Council for the Humanities. His vision, energy, and commitment to "gathering" communities in his native land was the seed from which has germinated the idea to create ongoing, regional coalitions. People like Fred Estrada, who are committed to the long-term common good of their region, will bring this idea to fruition. An Orange County humanities coalition will be an honor, indeed, to his memory.



# JUNE GRANTS AWARDED

## Humanities in California Life

### Nell Shipman: The Girl from God's Country

Sponsor: The Media Project, Portland, Oregon  
Project Director: Tina DiFelicianantonio  
Amount of Award: \$10,000 in outright funds

Nell Shipman, silent film director and star, was one of Hollywood's early independent filmmakers. This script will tell about her more than two dozen adventure films, made during the 1920s before Hollywood's studio system squeezed women out of high positions in the film industry. In 1922, Shipman built a studio on the shores of Priest Lake in northern Idaho, producing films that featured adventurous heroines and sensitivity to animals and the natural environment.



Director and actress Nell Shipman, during a tense moment from her 1922 adventure film *The Grub Stake*, which was recently screened in Los Angeles. Photo by Anthony Bruno, courtesy "The Girl from God's Country" project.

### Watts '65: To the Rebellion and Beyond

Sponsor: Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research, Los Angeles  
Project Director: Sarah Cooper  
Amount of Award: \$10,000 in outright funds

August 11 marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the beginning of the Watts Rebellion. This year, a conference of scholars and South Central Los Angeles residents will explore the roots and aftereffects of this landmark event in Los Angeles' and the nation's history. The project also includes a photomural exhibit, an oral history program, and a film series. Events are scheduled from August 6 to 11, 1990.

### Organizing at the Embassy Auditorium: The Power of Place

Sponsor: The Power of Place, Los Angeles  
Project Director: Donna Graves  
Amount of Award: \$10,000 in outright funds

This symposium and history project will look at the Embassy Auditorium as a gathering place for citizens from all of Los Angeles' neighborhoods and ethnic groups, with a particular focus on the Mexican-American community. Built in 1914, the Embassy was used for union rallies and musical events for more than three decades. The public symposium is scheduled for January 1991.

### Tesoros de la Raza: Folk Art of Mexico

Sponsor: Crocker Art Museum Association, Sacramento  
Project Director: Janice T. Driesbach  
Amount of Award: \$14,750 in matching funds if \$29,500 in outside gifts are raised

This project will bring several exhibits to Sacramento simultaneously: folk arts from Mexico, drawings of Diego Rivera, photos of religious subjects by Edward Weston, and exhibits on El Dia de los Muertos. A locally commissioned group of works entitled "Ofrendas" will also be exhibited. Programs for the community include presentations in schools, lectures, a poetry reading, a family festival and a concert. The exhibit and events occur during September 1990.

### Folk Roots, New Roots: Folklore in American Life

Sponsor: Oakland Museum, Oakland  
Project Director: L. Thomas Frye  
Amount of Award: \$7,275 in outright funds and \$15,000 in matching funds if \$30,000 in outside gifts are raised

This project will bring an exhibit from the Museum of Our National Heritage in Lexington, Massachusetts, to Oakland and present related programs about California's folklore traditions. The exhibition explores how folk traditions have helped people to forge unique cultural identities and to deal with social, economic and political change, as well as express a sense of community. Lectures, a conference and a discussion panel will cover a variety of topics, including how the American Indian is portrayed in advertising, American humor, and the popularization of the folk aesthetic. The exhibit opens in August 1990.

### San Quentin Museum Association Project

Sponsor: San Quentin Museum Association, San Quentin  
Project Director: Richard A. Nelson, Shirley Schaufel  
Amount of Award: \$10,000 in outright funds and \$6,762 in matching funds if \$13,524 in outside gifts are raised

This exhibit will examine the history of San Quentin Prison and its place in the larger political and social history of California. The original prison in the California system, San Quentin was created in 1950, when local entrepreneurs converted an old ship into a floating prison and used the prisoners to work a quarry on Angel Island. Once the exhibit is completed in 1991, the public will be invited to experience the meaning of incarceration and to view affluent Marin County from the perspective of the prison's cell blocks. Issues and topics to be addressed include the effects of World War II on the prison system, the women's prison at San Quentin, capital punishment, and the society within the prison.

### The Role of the Great Spanish Dramatist, Federico Garcia Lorca, in 20th Century Literature and the Humanities

Sponsor: Bilingual Foundation of the Arts, Los Angeles  
Project Director: Carmen Zapata  
Amount of Award: \$7,500 in outright funds

A series of programs will accompany the staging of a new translation of Federico Garcia Lorca's play *Dona Rosita, La Soltera*. Symposia presented in both Spanish and English will consider Lorca's insights into Spanish culture and history, along with his use of a theatrical form that combined music, dance and poetry. The play opens in September 1990.

### Sixth Annual California Indian Conference

Sponsor: Center for Ideas and Society, UC Riverside  
Project Director: Bernd Magnus  
Amount of Award: \$8,000 in outright funds

The area between San Diego and Santa Barbara continues to be home to some 95,000 Indians, an "invisible" minority in the large state of California. This conference will offer multi-disciplinary panels and performance to explore the history and present conditions of California Indians. Conference participants will examine and discuss issues such as Indian perceptions of the natural environment and the reburial of human remains and sacred objects. The conference will take place at UC Riverside in October 1990.

### Through Generations: Japanese Americans

Sponsor: Japanese American National Museum, Los Angeles  
Project Director: Karen L. Ishizuka  
Amount of Award: \$9,999 in outright funds

This film script will look at Japanese Americans' experience through historical materials and literature, from the 1880s to today. The experiences of Issei, or first generation immigrants, and their children and grandchildren will be told through the words of Japanese Americans. Though their economic circumstances may have improved markedly, Americans of Japanese descent are still often asked if they speak English or told to go back where they came from. The film will also explore issues of ethics, jurisprudence and comparative religion in the history of Japanese Americans in the United States.



A view of San Quentin in 1890, showing area that first housed women prisoners. Photo will become part of an exhibit exploring historical and social aspects of the original prison in California's system, courtesy of San Quentin Museum Association Project.



# JUNE GRANTS AWARDED

## Ancestors in America: Asian Americans, 1850 to the Present

Sponsor: Center for Educational Telecommunications,  
San Francisco

Project Director: Loni Ding

Amount of Award: \$10,000 in outright funds and  
\$7,510 in matching funds if  
\$15,020 in outside gifts are raised

These two scripts, the first of five or six episodes about Asian Americans, will document the experiences of Chinese immigrants and their generations of descendants, who have survived decades of discriminatory "national origins" quotas and the scapegoating of Asians during economic hard times. Later episodes will describe immigrants from Japan, Korea, the Philippines, and Southeast Asia.

## Humanities and Contemporary Issues

### Lost River

Sponsor: Modoc County Documentary Film  
Committee, Alturas

Project Director: Cheewa James

Amount of Award: \$10,000 in outright funds

This film script tells the story of the Modoc War of 1872-73, along with its effects then and since on California's Modoc Indians. Led by Captain Jack, 53 Modoc warriors fought as many as 1,000 U.S. soldiers and volunteers to remain in their ancestral home at Lost River, rather than return to the reservation they had been assigned to share with the more numerous Klamath people farther north. The script will make use of an eye-witness account by Jeff Riddle, a half-white, half-Modoc boy whose parents tried to avert the war.

### Leonard's Travels

Sponsor: Film Arts Foundation, San Francisco

Project Director: Polly "Berry" Minott

Amount of Award: \$10,000 in outright funds

This video script follows Leonard Kaplan, a seven-foot-tall man who had spent twenty years in and out of mental institutions, as he looks for a job in San Francisco. Now "deinstitutionalized," Kaplan confronts his problems along with other people's expectations and indifference through working as a peer-counselor to other mental health patients. The script will also consider ethical and cross-cultural issues relating to the treatment of the disabled.

## Humanities in Public Libraries

### Ethnic Reflections

Sponsor: Pasadena Public Library, Pasadena

Project Director: Bernadette Glover

Amount of Award: \$7,600 in outright funds

This reading and discussion program will focus on how Americans of African, Mexican, and Asian descent view themselves and their experiences, along with the social and historical context of the selected writings. Material for discussion includes the book of poems *River of Heaven* by Garrett Hongo, *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker, and the play *Zoot Suit* by Luis Valdez. The groups are scheduled to begin in September 1990.

## Humanities for Californians

### Dialogue: The Dramatic Work as Historical/Cultural Document

Sponsor: San Diego Repertory Theatre, San Diego

Project Director: Kirsten Brandt

Amount of Award: \$3,600 in outright funds

This project adds humanities lectures and essays on topics related to the repertory theatre's multicultural series, which includes the plays *Latins Anonymous* by Luisa Leschin, Armando Molina, Rick Najera and Diane Rodriguez, *A Lovely Sunday for Creve Coeur* by Tennessee Williams, and *The Life and Life of Bumpy Johnson* by Amiri Baraka. Topics for essays, which will be published in the company's newsletter before the play opens, are changing Latino roles and identity, the renaissance of Southern literature, and jazz as a theme in Afro-American literature. The series runs through January 1991.

### Invitation to Corwin

Sponsor: KLON-FM, Long Beach

Project Director: Edward Borgers

Amount of Award: \$10,000 in outright funds

During radio's "Golden Age," Norman Corwin earned a reputation as an outstanding and popular radio dramatist, while creating innovative formats such as the semi-documentary. His contributions have been extolled by Ray Bradbury, Charles Kuralt, and Studs Terkel, among others. This series of five one-hour radio programs will explore issues in Corwin's work, including his methods for engaging listeners in non-dramatic material and the effect of World War II on his writing. Each discussion will be followed by one of Corwin's radio dramas. The programs will be broadcast over KPFK in North Hollywood and KPFA in Berkeley.

### Looking Out: Critical Imperatives in World Dance

Sponsor: Dance Critics Association, Los Angeles

Project Director: David Gere

Amount of Award: \$7,500 in matching funds if  
\$15,000 in outright funds  
are raised

This four-day conference in conjunction with the Los Angeles Festival, "Looking Out" addresses previously unasked questions about world, or non-Euroamerican, dance. Five sessions will consider influences that world dance has had on American dance, perceptions of world dance, how critical and anthropological methods may come together in world dance criticism, and what the next century of multicultural dance may hold. Events are scheduled for August 1990.

### Quest for the Renaissance: The European Revival of Classical Antiquity

Sponsor: MusicSources, Berkeley

Project Director: Lee McRae

Amount of Award: \$10,000 in outright funds

Along with advances like the invention of the printing press, the rediscovery of the distant past fueled an explosion of ideas and creativity in 15th century Italy.

This project will bring to four libraries (Fort Bragg, Vallejo, Tracy, and Livermore) a series of lectures, discussions and performance on Renaissance topics such as Alberti, Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo; the book and the library: the impact of ancient music on that of the Renaissance; and the period as revealed in its music, letters and poems. The project was originally sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities. Events are scheduled through fall and winter 1990.

## Dissemination of the Humanities

### Minding the Farm

Sponsor: Film Arts Foundation, San Francisco

Project Director: Kim Shelton

Amount of Award: \$10,000 in outright funds and  
\$15,000 in matching funds if  
\$30,000 in outside gifts are raised

This half-hour film documentary explores issues involved in the protection of open space, particularly farmland, from metropolitan expansion. The story centers on the dilemma of two farm families in Marin County, where real estate prices have skyrocketed and suburban developments have encroached on farmland.

## CCH Awards Minigrants

New Langton Arts in San Francisco received \$1,500 to present a spring/summer lecture series, "On Popular Culture." Topics examine underlying issue in New Age culture, "slasher" films, and the appeal of Disneyland.

The Oakland meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology will include a symposium and curtain talks on African-American music. Topics include the jazz scene in Los Angeles, 1917-1929, contributions of Black radio in Los Angeles, the impact of black music on modern film, and the music of the slave. The Department of Music at San Diego State University received a \$1,500 minigrant to sponsor the additional programs, to be held November 8 - 11, 1990.

"Strangers in a Strange Land: Documenting Asian History" was a symposium in May that brought together Asian filmmakers and humanities scholars at the Pacific Rim Film Festival, to explore issues raised by the documentaries *Forbidden City, U.S.A.* and *Days of Waiting*. The minigrant award to UC Santa Cruz was \$1,500.

The Society for the Study of Native Arts and Sciences has received \$1,500 to present a workshop and lecture on the history and philosophy of capoeira, a Brazilian dance form that traces its roots to Yoruba and Bantu traditions. The events occurred in Berkeley during May.

Planned Parenthood of Santa Barbara received \$500 to enable Miriam Read, a scholar and public chautauqua performer, to attend a May conference, "Culture under Canvas," in Minnesota. The award amount was \$500.

For its symposium, "The Crisis of Artistic Representation in the 1990s for Women and People of Color," the University Art Museum of UC Riverside received a \$1,500 minigrant. The event in April explored the effects of political changes, such as affirmative action, upon artists and their prospects for recognition.



# CALENDAR OF HUMANITIES EVENTS

## EXHIBITS

- through August 26 **"Visionary San Francisco"** is an exhibit which surveys utopian architecture in San Francisco from the 19th century to the present, at the Museum of Modern Art, 401 Van Ness Avenue, S.F. 415/382-1846
- through Dec. 31 **"Roots Run Deep"** is an exhibit of oral histories and photos which explores the changes and continuity in Indian cultures over generations, at the Marin Museum of the American Indian, 2220 Novato Blvd., Novato. Museum hours are 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Mon.-Sat.; and 12 noon-4 p.m. on Sunday. 415/897-4064
- Aug. 1-Dec. 2 **"Tesoros de la Raza: Folk Art of Mexico"** is a showing of five exhibits to promote a wider appreciation of Mexican cultural and artistic traditions in the Sacramento region, at Crocker Art Museum, 216 "O" St., Sacramento. 916/449-5423
- Aug. 1-Sept. 30 **"The Living Legacy of Emma Goldman, Fifty Years After Her Death"** is a historical exhibit featuring Emma Goldman's role in establishing free speech and reproductive rights, S.F. Public Library, Main Branch, Civic Center. Portions of the exhibit will also be on display at the Berkeley Public Library, Downtown Branch, Sept. 25-Oct. 8. 415/643-8518
- Aug. 9-Sept. 16 **"What Style Is It?"** is a Smithsonian Institution architectural exhibit at the Chico Museum, 141 Salem Street. Museum hours are Wed.-Sun., 12 noon-4 p.m. 916/891-4336
- Aug. 18-Nov. 11 **"Folk Roots, New Roots: Folklore in American Life"** is an exhibit that will explore the many important ways in which Americans during the past century have used folk traditions, at the Oakland Museum, 1000 Oak Street. Museum hours are Wed.-Sat., 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sun., 12 noon-7 p.m.; and closed on Mon. and Tues. 415/273-3401
- Sept. 14-Oct. 24 **"Family Folklore"** is a Smithsonian Institution traveling exhibit about the ways that people identify and remember their families' traditions, supplemented by local materials and programming. At Sutter County Community Memorial Museum, 1333 Butte House Road, Yuba City. Museum hours are 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Tues.-Fri.; 12 noon-4 p.m., Sat. and Sun. 916/741-7141

Sept. 30-Nov. 7 **"What Style Is It?"** (see above) travels to the Grace Hudson Museum, 431 So. Main Street, Ukiah. Museum hours are Wed.-Sat., 10-4:30 p.m.; Sun, 12 noon-4:30 p.m. 707/462-3370

## EVENTS

- August 11 **"On Popular Culture"** will present a lecture and discussion focusing on the theme "Disneyland: Religious Reveling in Real America." They will discuss the cultural and religious contradictions of Disneyland as a closed utopian space, at New Langton Arts, 1246 Folsom Street, 8 p.m., S.F. 415/626-5416
- August 11 **"Watts '65: To the Rebellion and Beyond"** is an all-day conference about the historical and contemporary experience of people in So. Central Los Angeles, using the Watts rebellion as a focal point, at the Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research, 6120 So. Vermont, Los Angeles. An accompanying exhibit on the rebellion will continue on display at the library until December 31. 213/759-6063
- Aug. 24-30 **Berkeley in the Sixties**, a documentary film about social protest and change in America during the 1960s, will be screened at the Minor Theater, Arcata. 415/841-5050
- Aug. 31-Sept. 3 **"Looking Out: Critical Imperatives in World Dance"** is a conference addressing questions about world or non-Euroamerican dance and considering the influences that world dance has had on American dance, at California State University, Los Angeles. 213/662-8609
- Sept. 15 **"Quest for the Renaissance: The Revival of Classical Antiquity"** begins. This is a four-part lecture/demonstration series which includes "Alberti, Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo," "Rebirth in Music," "The Book and the Library," and "Poets, Letters and Musicians." Sessions continue on Sept. 22 and 29 and Oct. 6 at the Mendocino Library, 499 Laurel, Ft. Bragg. 707/964-2020
- Sept. 19-25 **Berkeley in the Sixties** (see above) is screened at the Nuart Theater, Los Angeles. 415/841-5050

- October **"The Role of the Great Spanish Dramatist, Federico Garcia Lorca"** is a symposium series, in both Spanish and English, and performance of a new translation of Lorca's play *Dona Rosita: La Soltera*. 213/225-4044
- Oct. 5-7 **"An Ethnic Mosaic: Southeast Asians in Fresno"** is a lecture/discussion series promoting greater awareness of these ethnic groups and their cultures' richness. A historical-cultural exhibit will also be displayed, at California State University, Fresno. 209/294-3013
- Oct. 6 The Tracy Public Library begins the lecture/discussion series **"Quest for the Renaissance: The Revival of Classical Antiquity"** (see above for description). The series continues on Oct. 13, 20, and 27 at 3 p.m., 20 East Eaton Ave. 209/835-2221
- Oct. 13 **"As Others See Us"** is an all-day conference featuring portions of stage, film or television productions with a labor theme, followed by a panel discussion and analysis by humanities scholars, at the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, 2130 West 9th Street, Los Angeles, 9 a.m. - 4:40 p.m. 213/825-9602
- Oct. 14 **"Quest for the Renaissance: The Revival of Classical Antiquity"** lecture/discussion series (see above) begins at the J.F. Kennedy Library, 505 Santa Clara, Vallejo. Sessions continue on Oct. 21 and 28 and Nov. 4, at 2 p.m. 707/553-5210
- Oct. 18-24 **Berkeley in the Sixties** (see above) is screened at the Sashmill Theater, Santa Cruz. 415/841-5050
- Oct. 19 **"Quest for the Renaissance: The Revival of Classical Antiquity"** (see above) begins at the Livermore Public Library, 1000 So. Livermore Ave. Sessions begin at 7:30 p.m., continuing on Oct. 26 and, Nov. 2 and 9. 415/373-5513
- Oct. 25-28 **"Sixth Annual California Indian Conference"** will focus on many aspects of California Indian life and history and will include workshops and performances, at University of California, Riverside. Advanced registration is recommended. 714/787-3987
- Oct. 27 **"As Others See Us"** (see above) continues, with an all-day conference in the Riverside-San Bernardino area, UFCW #1167, 855 W. San Bernardino Avenue, Rialto. 213/825-9602



### CCH-Sponsored Films Gather Awards

At spring festivals for independent films, several recent films that the Council helped to sponsor received acclaim.

In Oakland, the National Educational Film and Video Festival selected *Common Threads: Stories from the Quilt* for its Best of Northern California and Golden Apple Awards, as well as naming the film a finalist in the Best of Festival category. Other CCH-sponsored films named as finalists for the top honor were *The Wilderness Idea: John Muir, Gifford Pinchot and the First Great Battle for Wilderness* and *Super Chief: The Life and Legacy of Earl Warren*, both of which also received Gold Apple Awards. *Berkeley in the Sixties* and *Preserving a Way of Life: People of the Klamath* each received Silver Apple Awards.

At the San Francisco International Film Festival, *Wilderness Idea* took the Best of Category, History award, and *Common Threads* and *Berkeley in the Sixties* each received honorable mention in the Documentary category.

CCH currently lists three of these award winners — *Wilderness Idea*, *Preserving a Way of Life*, and Oscar recipient *Common Threads* — in its Film & Speaker Directory. Available from either CCH office free of charge, the directory explains how nonprofit organizations statewide can apply for a minigrant to present a local film-and-discussion program.

### NEH Gives Green Light to "Talking about Vietnam"

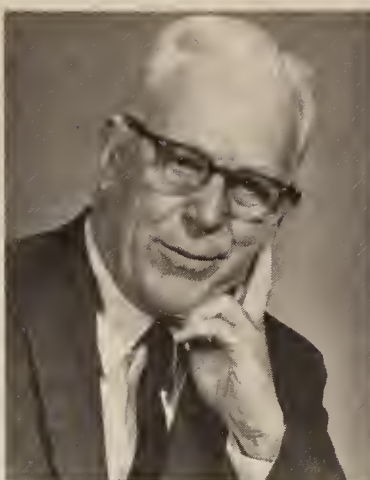
The National Endowment for the Humanities has awarded a \$160,755 grant to the Peninsula Library System to bring its successful "Talking about Vietnam" program to libraries statewide during 1990 and 1991.

During 1987 and 1988, the library system created a pilot project, with CCH funding, that explored the literary trails left by those who experienced and wrote about America's longest and most soul-shaking war. Project director Susan Holmer organized a six-part series in Pacifica and San Mateo. The new seven-part program considers the war from many points of view, including the personal experience of Vietnamese and American soldiers. Topics include the evolution of U.S. involvement in Vietnam, military strategy, moral values during war, the anti-war movement, and the war's persistent effect on our culture.

Programs are scheduled to take place in Fremont, Alhambra, Azusa, Carlsbad, Pleasant Hill, Crescent City, Downey, Glendale, Brawley, Los Angeles, Merced, Seaside, Napa, Orange, Pomona, Redwood City, Riverside, San Diego, Stockton, and West Los Angeles.

Participants in the twenty libraries will read histories, novels, and memoirs, as well as view the film *Good Morning, Vietnam!* Each meeting will focus on specific materials, in part to provide a common discussion field about aspects of the war that ended 15 years ago, but whose name can still touch off explosive debate among Americans.

For more information, please call Susan Brooks or Rhea Rubin at the Peninsula Library System, (415) 349-2895.



At left, U.S. Chief Justice Earl Warren. Quest Productions' documentary *Super Chief* about Warren's life earned recent prizes (photo by Wide World Photos). At right, a scene from *Berkeley in the Sixties*, an award-winning documentary scheduled for several screenings statewide (photo by Don Kechely).

### Free to Speak, Free to Write

In honor of the 200th anniversary of the Bill of Rights, the Pennsylvania Council for the Humanities has created "To Preserve These Rights," an exhibit exploring the history, meaning, and current testing of the Bill of Rights and the freedoms they protect.

The exhibit was created by a team of historians and graphic artists and is suitable for schools, courthouses, libraries, city halls and other public spaces. It consists of twelve lightweight panels that can be assembled into three freestanding kiosks. The cost is \$150, including an 80-page users' guide with essays, a bibliography and suggestions for librarians and teachers. For more information, please call the Pennsylvania council at (215) 925-1005.

### Proposal-Writing Workshops Scheduled

Free workshops are scheduled at CCH's Los Angeles office, on August 22 and 23, 10 a.m. until 12:30 p.m., 6th Floor conference room. Please call (213) 623-5993 for reservations.

In San Francisco, the workshops are tentatively scheduled for August 10 and 23, from 10 a.m. until noon, in the 2nd Floor conference room. Please call (415) 391-1474 to confirm.

### Council Membership Nominations Invited

The California Council for the Humanities, an organization of public-spirited citizens interested in the humanities, will be selecting new members for its Council in 1991 and invites nominations from the public.

Members serve four-year terms. The public is invited to submit names of scholars and other Californians who have made significant contributions to the humanities. In inviting new members, the Council seeks representation from California's diverse geographical, ethnic, and professional constituencies.

You are encouraged to submit a nomination on the

form below. Each completed form must be accompanied by a resume and a brief statement that indicates the nominee's occupation, education, areas of public service, and special qualifications for membership. If you are nominating yourself, please include a letter of recommendation; if nominating another, please include assurance that the nominee is willing to serve.

Please submit names for consideration as soon as possible. Nominations must be in the Council's San Francisco office no later than October 12, 1990.

I nominate \_\_\_\_\_  
as a member of the California Council for the Humanities.

Professional Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominated By: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Send to:  
CCH, 312 Sutter St., Suite 601, San Francisco, CA 94108



# CALIFORNIA COUNCIL FOR THE HUMANITIES

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## NEXT PROPOSAL DEADLINE: Oct. 1, 1990

Proposals for this deadline must conform to the 1990 Program Announcement. Send 10 copies of all proposals to the San Francisco office by the due date.

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# HUMANITIES NETWORK

Summer 1990  
Volume 12/Number 3



As part of this year's public conference, CCH worked with more than a dozen community groups to plan and help sponsor locally created exhibits, talks and symposia relating to the theme, "A Sense of Belonging, A Sense of Place." On June 8, writer Nikki Giovanni delivered the 1990 Public Humanities Lecture, and on June 9 a public conference explored Oakland's past and future as a multicultural city. This issue of the *Humanities Network* features highlights from these programs.

Photos: *Top:* On June 9, a multicultural panel asked the question, how do we live together in a culturally diverse community? Shown here, panelists William Wong of the Oakland Tribune and Renato Rosaldo of Stanford's Anthropology Dept. *Middle:* Nikki Giovanni, 1990 Public Humanities Lecturer, spoke with audience members after her talk. *Bottom:* A gathering at the Camron-Stanford House by Lake Merritt discusses the history and politics surrounding the development of Downtown Oakland's manmade lake. Photos by Deborah Lohrke.



## 1990 PUBLIC HUMANITIES CONFERENCE

"A  
Sense of  
Belonging  
A  
Sense of  
Place"

Oakland, California

